

GENERAL CONVENTION, BALTIMORE, 1871.

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REPORT
OF THE
JOINT COMMITTEE
ON
CHRISTIAN EDUCATION.

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PREFATORY NOTE.

THE following Report has been printed and distributed, through the liberality of a lay member of the recent General Convention. He trusts that its wide circulation will help to excite an interest in the minds of members of our communion, in the great but much-neglected work of education within the Church and under her influence and guidance. And he has ventured, through the Secretary of the Committee, respectfully to request those of the Reverend Clergy who may receive this Report, to bring this important subject before their congregations at some convenient time.

The committee which prepared the following Report has been continued, with authority to sit during the recess of the Convention, in order to give them time to collect statistics, and present to the General Convention of 1874 a full and carefully-considered Report on the subject of Christian Education.

And the Secretary of the Committee, on their behalf, earnestly requests, from those into whose hands this Report may come,

information in the form of statistics, suggestions, views printed or in writing, bearing on any of the following heads, viz. :

- I. Home training.
- II. Sunday schools.
- III. Private schools.
- IV. Incorporated schools for boys, and also for girls ; how to render them at once cheap and good.
- V. The Common schools, and the position which the Church should maintain in relation to them.
- VI. The College, furnishing the highest liberal culture, in union with the teachings and influence of our holy religion.

All communications should be addressed to

The Rev. A. JACKSON, D.D.,
Secretary of the Joint Committee on Christian Education,
HARTFORD, Conn.

REPORT

OF THE

JOINT COMMITTEE ON CHRISTIAN EDUCATION.

YOUR committee have supposed that, in preparing their report, they would be expected to keep in view two objects: First, to give information in reference to the present state of education, so far as the Church is concerned; secondly, if possible, to make such a presentation of the whole subject as may induce the members of our communion to rise to the full measure of their duty in regard to this great work. So far as we have attempted to deal with the first of these heads, we found ourselves stayed on the very threshold of inquiry by the absence of adequate statistics. We therefore dismiss this part of our subject from further consideration at present, hoping that we may be permitted to sit during the recess of the Convention, and prepare a report, based on a wide induction of facts, which may prove of service in the future consideration of the question.

The first educator is the parent—the mother, the father—to whom this duty is assigned by Divine appointment. It can never be put aside or thrown off. A Christian education must begin at home. The child must breathe an atmosphere charged with

the quickening elements of faith and love. The fear of God must brood over the household—over the life of the family—and this will harmonize discordant elements, and bring them into loving obedience to the Divine law. Other instrumentalities may be used to aid parents in the work of training up their children in the knowledge and the love of God. The Sunday school can do much to supply the place of parental instruction. But there is great reason to fear that Christian parents, in very many cases, either neglect, or remit to the Sunday school, an office for the discharge of which they themselves are primarily responsible, and from which they cannot be released. The catechetical instruction of the pastor is of the highest value as a means of training up children in Christian knowledge; and its more frequent use, in our time, is a most hopeful sign. But faithful teaching in the home circle, sanctified and enforced by prayer and holy living, ought to be the strong foundation of all other modes of Christian nurture. The firm resolve of the head of every Christian family—a resolve whose moving force should communicate itself to every member of the household—should be that of the patriarch who held himself responsible for the religious training of his family, saying, “As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.”

Parochial schools are an important agency in the work of Christian education. And where they are practicable, and can be rendered efficient, especially in those parts of the country where the common schools are deficient in number or in thoroughness of training, they should be heartily sustained. But they can, only in a very limited degree, supply the place of the public schools of the country.

Private, boarding, and day schools, render most valuable aid to the cause of education. They supply what the public school can furnish only in very scanty measure—the union of true

Christian nurture with refined and thorough intellectual culture. The increasing number of these schools, for both boys and girls, which we see springing up in widely separated portions of our Church, is at once a proof of growing strength, and of a more correct conception of duty. And we accept with thankfulness and joy the many tokens which indicate that Churchmen are daily rising to a higher and more adequate conception of their duty in this direction.

The weighty objection which lies against these schools is the great expense of the education which they offer. They are thus placed beyond the reach of a large number of those who, were they less expensive, would be glad to send their sons and their daughters to them. And one of the great problems which the Church is called to find a solution for in our day, is this—how to found and carry on schools of high character, where the members of our communion can procure for their children, *at a moderate cost*, an education which is the happy product of that harmonious union of Christian nurture with intellectual training which the Church alone can give. For the exceedingly great expense of education in our schools, especially those for girls, is fraught with perils of the gravest character. How many girls, in all parts of the country, but especially at the West, have been alienated forever from the religion and from the sympathy of their parents, by being sent to Romish schools, because the education was cheap ! It is a question for the wise and patient consideration of the Church, whether the services of highly educated Christian women, given freely for Christ's sake, without cost, beyond what may be required for a very frugal and simple maintenance, might not conduce to this desirable result, so far as schools for girls are concerned. How the problem can be solved, where the services of men are required for boys' schools of a high grade, it behooves the Church earnestly to consider.

The attitude which we should maintain toward the common schools of the country has engaged the attention of your committee. And we feel that we ought to give to these schools our cordial support. We ought to do this from the inspiration of patriotism. For the intellectual and moral culture which they give to the youth of the whole country is of vital importance to public order and to the maintenance and progress of our Christian civilization. We ought to lend this hearty support to the common schools, for the sake of Christianity itself. For the schools are better than their principles. They rise above their theory. And, even where formal instruction in religious truth is positively interdicted, there is, nevertheless, in these very schools, a subtle Christian element. It cannot be excluded. It is in the atmosphere of the schoolroom. It quickens, in some degree, the common life of the school. It comes from the Christian home. It speaks from the page of the reader. It rays forth from the person of the teacher. For there would be no hazard in saying that a very great proportion of the teachers in our common schools, to-day, are Christian men and Christian women. The religious instruction of our common schools is, indeed, far below what many of us would desire. But who can doubt that the youth who are educated in these schools, even as they are now, are vastly more receptive of the Christian religion, than those who are sunk in ignorance and dominated by their sensual appetites?

But while Churchmen lend a firm support to the common schools from the dictates at once of patriotism and of religion, they should unite their influence with that of Christian men of other communions, in order to secure in them as large a measure of religious instruction as may be expedient and attainable.

The only other topic which your committee propose to bring to your attention at the present time, is that of the liberal educa-

tion which is given by the College, as distinguished from the School. And the consideration which we shall give to this subject will be brief, notwithstanding its transcendent importance.

In the feeble state of our Church, which continued for half a century after the revolutionary period, it was necessary that Churchmen should send their sons to the colleges founded by other religious bodies, which were strong, while we were weak. We owe much to these institutions for services rendered in the past. We owe much to them for services which they are still rendering. Yet, who can doubt that colleges which can give intellectual culture equal to the very best given in the older colleges of the country, and can add to this an education of the spiritual nature of the student in the atmosphere of love and reverence which the Church creates by her presence and her daily Service, is better and safer for our sons? Until we strengthen our colleges with liberal endowments, and place them on broad and deep foundations, and then cause our sons to throng their halls, we will continue weak and dependent in one of the most important means of growth and influence. The power of moulding the minds of young men at the formative and critical period of college life, is one of the mightiest that any religious body can wield. And what is our position? The vast majority of our young men who are at college to-day, are studying at institutions whose tone and spirit are not in sympathy with our Church. The Christian bodies around us are far wiser. They are contributing immense sums of money to found and develop their own colleges; and then, unless weighty local or special considerations intervene, they never fail to send their sons to them. They well know that these institutions will prove in the future, as they always have proved, the mightiest agencies for strengthening their denomination and extending their influence. When will Churchmen learn

wisdom on this vitally important subject? We already have colleges so well established that it only requires the fostering care of the members of our Church to render them great and powerful. They now give a liberal education as thorough as that which is given by the oldest colleges of the country; and they imbue this education with the loving religious spirit of our Book of Common Prayer. Let Churchmen support their own colleges, as all other religious bodies support theirs, and then they would, in a few years, compare favorably with the oldest in the land, even in what constitutes for them a chief attraction, the number of students in attendance.

In view of the able reports presented to this convention by former committees, especially in 1865 and 1868, it is not thought expedient to enter further on the consideration of this subject at the present time. Your committee is without adequate statistics, and the session of the Convention is too short to admit of their being procured for present use. Those laid before the Committee on the State of the Church are deficient, for our purpose, in many important particulars. And yet we feel that the subject confided to us is of the very first importance in its bearings on the welfare of the Church; and that it ought to be leisurely and thoroughly investigated, and then carefully digested, and a well considered report prepared for the use of the Convention. This subject has manifold aspects; and to do any sort of justice to it would require the collecting of a large number of facts from a great variety of sources, and a very thorough consideration of them, in order to deduce correct conclusions which might serve to guide the mind and determine the action of the Church on this great question of Christian education.

Your committee would therefore respectfully submit this slight sketch of a report, and embody their views in the resolutions appended, with the hope that the Convention may be pleased,

either to raise another committee, or to continue the present one with permission to report to the next General Convention :

Resolved, (1) the House of Bishops concurring, That except where weighty local or special considerations intervene, it is our duty to sustain our own educational institutions by our gifts and our patronage.

Resolved, (2) the House of Bishops concurring, That the Joint Committee on Education be continued, with authority to prepare and present to the next General Convention a full and well-digested report on this subject.

W. M. GREEN,
J. B. KERFOOT,
WILLIAM W. NILES,
A. JACKSON,
JAMES DE KOVEN,
ALEXANDER BURGESS,
CHARLES MINNEGERODE,
D. R. GOODWIN,
JOHN W. GALLEHER,
JOHN W. ANDREWS,
GEORGE R. FAIRBANKS,
GEORGE F. COMSTOCK,
CHARLES J. JENKINS,
JOHN B. HOWE,
THOS. A. JOHNSON.

NOTE.—The House of Bishops, in passing the foregoing resolutions, enlarged the committee, on their behalf, by adding to it the names of the Bishop of Michigan and the Bishop of Wisconsin.

